

Fire and Ice by masterofsome

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Summary:

Hawkins High School's former ice queen returns only to have her title stripped away and her friends turned against her. But when she reconciles with her former best friend Steve Harrington, she finds herself starting where they'd left off.

1. A Deposed Queen

September 1st, 1984

The parking lot of Hawkins High School was flooded with cars and students. The first day of school atmosphere had appeared to be like any other day - friend groups huddled together as they chatted away and car radios blasting the latest pop and rock songs.

A loud "Holy shit!" cut the normalcy short and drew the attention of the entire parking lot. The exclamation was made by an upperclass male student who pointed off into the distance. Student's eyes shifted in the direction he pointed to when jaws dropped and eyes widened in disbelief.

Driving on the stretch of road that led to the parking lot was a red 1980 Mercedes-Benz convertible. The top of the car was down, revealing a brunette driver who's hair blew in the wind. Any doubts and uncertainty that were felt immediately vanished when the car pulled into the parking lot and everyone was able to see that the driver was indeed *her*.

Bridget Mumford, Hawkins High School's former Ice Queen, had returned.

The last anyone had heard of or seen Bridget Mumford was the summer of 1983. When she hadn't shown up the first day of junior year, her disappearance was the main topic of conversation for a month or so. While the theories regarding her whereabouts varied, one thing stayed true - it had something to do with the death of her father.

Many believed she'd had a mental break down and had to spend time in a mental hospital. Others thought she simply ran away. The one theory that people discussed the most was that she was the one to break in and destroy the town doctor's office (possibly due to a grudge she'd held) and was spending time in juvie for it.

Either way the return Bridget Mumford was a sight to behold for the students of Hawkins High school.

For Bridget, returning to her old stomping ground for her senior year of high school felt strange. Not that she wasn't going to let everyone who was staring at her know. Putting the car in park, she did her best to avoid the hundreds of eyes on her and carry on as usual. She grabbed her bag and books and got out of the car.

"Look who decided to finally show her face."

Bridget, recognizing that voice anywhere, turned around to see her old friend Carol. On either side of Carol was Tommy H. and Nicole, smirking devilishly at Bridget.

"Good to see you too Carol," Bridget responded with an unimpressed tone. "I see you've been running the place in my absence."

"You can come back if you want." Carol then pouted. "Oh wait, you're unstable now so never mind."

Bridget chuckled much to the surprise of onlooking students. She knew exactly what Carol, Tommy H., and Nicole were doing as she'd done it before to other people. They were putting on a show for the entire school but not just any kind of show. It was what Bridget once referred to as a "Roman's Torture" in which one circles their prey as they humiliate them for the sheer entertainment of the onlookers.

Carol folded her arms across her chest as her eyes studied Bridget. "Lost some weight there. Did they not feed you enough in the looney bin?"

"Or in juvie?" Tommy H. chimed in.

"Damn. I thought we were friends," Bridget deadpanned.

Carol scoffed. "Funny, I thought that same exact thing when you abandoned us."

Bridget rolled her eyes as Carol took a step forward. "You gave up on us so we gave up on you. Surely, you can understand where we're coming from considering your dad gave up living."

Sharp gasps followed from students. Their eyes turned to Bridget as they waited her response. Would she cry? Would she attack Carol?

The possibilities appeared endless.

To everyone's surprise, Bridget smiled sympathetically . "I'm really disappointed in you, Carol," she said, shaking her head. "Bringing up my dead dad? Really? That's the absolute best you got? You know, all those time you sucked up to me...I would've thought you learned. Too bad you can't suck and swallow information like you do semen."

Onlookers burst into laughter. Carol's face fell, confidence shattered. Bridget, having felt satisfied, pushed past Carol and started to walk away.

"You think you still matter?" Carol called out to her.

She turned around as Carol went on. "No one here gives a shit about you. No one is afraid of you anymore. You're history, Mumford. You were dethroned the second you ran away."

Bridget stood there, unfazed by Carol's declaration. "They may not fear me, but considering how everyone's been staring at me from the moment I've arrived, clearly shits are still given." She paused. "You want my job, take it. It's all yours."

With that, she turned her back to her former friends and to the entire school and kept walking. They could depose her in front of the entire school, but they could never break her. She'd be damned if she let that ever happen.

Instead of being in her first period class, Bridget had to spend her first few minutes back in Hawkins High School in the guidance counselor's office. Mrs. Bennett smiled as the young woman took a seat across from her.

"Settling in, ok?" Mrs. Bennett asked as she pulled out Bridget's file from her desk drawer.

Bridget pursed her lips into a flat smile. "Yep."

Mrs. Bennett eyed the documents in the folder for a moment, nodding her head occasionally. Bridget watched as she waited patiently for a

reaction out of Mrs. Bennett from the information she was reading. Then, the sight of her eyes widened made Bridget crack a small but victorious smile.

"So," the woman began as she removed her glasses and shifted her gaze to Bridget, "all girl's school, huh? How was that experience?"

Bridget shrugged. "Fine. Nothing special to report."

Mrs. Bennett glanced back down at the paper. "All B's with good comments." She turned it over and began reading the document that came next. Bridget pursed her lips back, knowing exactly Mrs. Bennett and where the conversation would lead to next.

Much to Bridget's surprise, Mrs. Bennett looked at her and said, "We don't need to discuss this evaluation further unless you want to."

"Everything that needs to be said is all on there," she answered.

With that, Mrs. Bennett closed the file and smiled. "Look, I can tell the last thing you wanna talk about is what's on there. So I won't discuss it with you further. I do, however, ask that if you do want to talk about it or anything else that you come to me. My office is always open. Got it?"

Bridget nodded, giving the woman a small but genuine smile. Mrs. Bennett handed Bridget a sheet of paper which had her schedule and locker info on it. As she got up to leave, Mrs. Bennett said, "And Bridget? Should you feel the need to switch the schedule around, I can make that possible."

"That won't be necessary," Bridget remarked with a confident grin.

She closed the door behind her and headed toward the hallway. She glanced down to find her locker number.

"Bridge?"

Hearing the nickname made her lift her head up. Only one person called her that. She looked over her shoulder to find her suspicions confirmed.

Standing on the other side of the hallway was Steve Harrington.

His perfectly styled brown hair was still voluminous and thick as she remembered. Those damning pair of dark brown eyes she loved made her entire face light up. All that time she was gone, she'd believed she'd never see Steve Harrington again. Seeing him in the flesh was enough to reduce her to tears.

"Hi Steve," she said, her voice cracking.

Steve hurried toward her and embraced her tightly in his arms. Bridget threw her arms around him, burying her face on his shoulder.

"I can't believe you came back," he whispered.

Bridget pulled back and put the palm of her hands on his cheeks. Her smile widened. "I really missed you, Harrington."

He took her hands in his and squeezed them. "Where were you? What happened? Why didn't you call me?"

She exhaled softly. It wasn't that she didn't want to tell Steve - she did and she knew he was the only one she owed an explanation to. He'd been her best friend and was there for her when her father died, having stood by her side during the funeral. As much as she trusted him, she wasn't sure if he would fully understand why she'd done it.

Before she could say anything, a female said, "Steve, what's going on?"

Bridget and Steve looked over to see a petite girl with light brown hair that barely touched her shoulders and big, beautiful blue eyes. Steve's face lit up at the sight of her and he let go of Bridget.

"Nance, this is Bridget," Steve told her. He turned to Bridget. "This is my girlfriend, Nancy."

Nancy smiled as she walked over toward them. She held out her hand. "It's nice to finally meet you. He's told me so much about you."

Bridget shook her hand and grinned. "You as well." She looked at

Steve. "Hopefully he didn't tell you anything bad about me."

Steve laughed as he put his arm around Nancy. "Oh just that it wasn't fun hanging out with Carol and Tommy after you left."

"Yeah, I had an interesting run-in with them this morning."

He rolled his eyes. "I guess now you know King Steve is no longer."

"No, but if it makes you feel better Carol 'dethroned' me this morning."

Steve pouted playfully. "Aw, she got a wittle scared seeing you come back."

"Eh, let her. I wasn't really a fan of those three anyway so cares?"

Bridget looked at Nancy and smiled. "Besides, it looks like you're doing well without them. She's cute."

"Yeah she is," he said as he pressed a kiss to Nancy's temple. That was Bridget's cue to leave.

"Well I gotta go find my locker, but it was good to see you again," Bridget said. She looked at Nancy. "It was really nice meeting you."

"You too," Nancy acknowledged with a nod.

"I'll see you around, ok?" Steve asked.

Bridget nodded as she turned around and kept walking. A single tear strolled down her cheek which she quickly wiped away. She cursed herself for not knowing better. Of course Steve would be with someone else. What was he supposed to do, wait for her?

Besides, he never was serious about her. They were friends who flirted and she was always the one who took it too far. All the little moments, the inside jokes - she'd over thought anything he'd done or said to her. Sure, she was the only girl Steve Harrington did care about one point, but now, for the second time she had been replaced.

Only this replacement hurt more.

2. Chapter Two: Halloween

October 1984

Bridget was in the girl's bathroom washing her hands when she felt something poke her arm. Her eyes shifted to find Tina standing beside her, holding out an orange piece of paper. She didn't have to look down to know that it was an invitation to Tina's Halloween party. Nearly half of the entire school had been carrying them around all day. Everyone except her at least.

Not that she cared. Tina was part of the old group and as far as Bridget had been concerned, she did whatever Carol and Nicole told her to do.

Bridget turned off the sink and reached for the paper towel. "Nice try, Tina," she mumbled.

"I'm being serious," Tina retorted.

Bridget raised an eyebrow as she chucked the crumbled paper towel into the trash can. "We've been back in school for about two months and you haven't said two words to me." She leaned against the bathroom sink. "Are Carol and Nicole putting you up to this?"

Tina's eyes widened. "No!" She quickly glanced over her shoulder as if to make sure no one else was coming in. "They don't know I'm doing this."

"How brave of you then."

"Look, this is senior year. This is our last year to just do whatever we want and to have fun. You should live it up, you know?"

Bridget wasn't buying it. Tina wasn't cruel, but she also wasn't someone who cared about others without gaining something from it. Either way, Bridget wasn't going to give in too easily. She may have retired from being the game master, but that didn't mean she'd forgotten how to play it.

She took the invitation from Tina's hands. She scanned the invitation

for the time and location. Letting out a "hmpf", she then crumbled the piece of paper in her hands and smiled at Tina. "I'll think about it."

Tossing the invitation into the trash can, she walked past Tina on her way out of the bathroom.

She pushed through the crowded hallway, trying to dodge the couples that held hands and the groups of three or more who walked side-by-side ever so slowly.

The bell for fifth period rang as she entered the library. She took a seat in the far back of the library and pulled out her notebook. She turned to the page she bookmarked with a piece of paper. She took out the piece of paper and read the instructions.

Most of the lessons we learn are taken from obstacles we encounter in our lives. Recall a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you take from that experience?

Bridget twirled the pencil in her hand as she read the question over and over again. No matter how many times she'd read it and no matter how clear the answer had been to her, bringing herself to write it down was a challenge. The trashcan in her bedroom was overflowing with sheets of paper filled with her poor attempts at writing it down.

Why college essays had to be so personal was beyond her. She was a B student and her record was clean. Wasn't that enough information for them to know?

"Hey Bridge."

Steve threw down his books onto the table as he sat across from her. Bridget was thankful that they managed to get free period together as it gave them a chance to reconnect. Steve had been the only friend she had left and, in truth, he had been the only friend who mattered.

His eyes wandered to Bridget's notebook. "What are you doing?"

"Writing the next great American novel," she replied drolly.

"Which college is this for?" he asked, picking up the piece of paper with the essay prompt on it.

"University of Michigan."

Steve raised an eyebrow. "Why there?"

She shrugged. "Mom went there so it's easy for me to get in." She looked up. "Why?"

"Nothing..It's just...it's out of state."

"It's not that far away." She leaned back in her chair as she processed Steve's answer. Why did he care she was applying outside of Indiana? Did he want her to stay and was that his way of telling her so? Her heart rate picked up at the idea of him caring where she was applying. "I'm also applying to Indiana State."

Steve grinned. "Same here. Nance is actually helping me write the essay for it."

She pursed her lips back as her excitement faded. No matter how many times he said *her* name, Bridget could feel her heart sink deeper and deeper into her chest. The mention of Nancy not only ruined these little moments Bridget shared with Steve, but it had become a reminder that Steve moved on.

What was even more frustrating for Bridget was that she couldn't bring herself to hate Nancy. Not only did Nancy make Steve happy, but she turned him into a better person - something Bridget couldn't have done even if she'd never left Hawkins. Steve's happiness over her feelings was a compromise Bridget knew she had to make even if it made her sick to her stomach.

"That's good," she remarked, flashing a small smile. "I sent my application for that one last week."

"Look at you being so organized," he teased.

She chuckled. "I try."

Her focus returned back to the lined piece of paper as she tried to

find the right answer and the right words to say.

"Here."

Bridget looked up and her eye's widened as Steve shifted closer to her. If he moved any closer, they would've been cheek-to-cheek. She couldn't hear what he was saying as she was distracted by Steve's face and lips. An image of her reaching down to kiss them flashed in her mind, sending chills throughout her entire body. The last time they'd been so close together it ended with a kiss. It always did. She swallowed hard as the voice in her head pleaded with her.

You know better than to go through with this. You know he has a girlfriend. Don't do this.

"Or you could write about coming back to Hawkins or what you were doing when you went away."

His voice interrupted her thoughts as her eyes met his. She opened her mouth, letting out a nervous chuckle.

"I...uh...can you excuse me for just a sec?"

Before she gave him the chance to answer, she rose out of her chair and hurried out of the library. Once she was outside the library and into the empty hallway, she pressed her back against the wall and closed her eyes. Tears began to form as she quietly mumbled under her breath, "Keep it together. Keep it together."

She didn't

"Are you ok?"

She opened her eyes to see Tina standing beside her. Her hand was on Bridget's shoulder. Bridget immediately wiped her eyes, knowing damn well she was screwed as Tina was bound to tell Carol and Nicole about this.

"What do you want me to say?" Bridget snapped as she took a step back. "They'll believe you regardless what I tell you so don't bother."

"I'm not telling Carol and Nicole jackshit," Tina assured. "Look, I

know I haven't reached out since you got back, but I wouldn't be where I am if you hadn't shown mercy to me."

Early sophomore year, Bridget - who had was just beginning to peak with her popularity - found Tina crying in the bathroom stall. Even in her most evil state, Bridget managed to find an ounce of sympathy within her to give to Tina. So she opened the bathroom door to find Tina's eye makeup smeared and hair a mess. Bridget extended her hand out and said, *"If you promise to keep your mouth shut, I'll fix your face."*

Tina agreed and as Bridget reapplied makeup onto Tina's face, the girls got to talking. Tina revealed that a junior she had been interested in asked her out on a date only to stand her up and when she'd come to school to confide in him, she found him making out with someone else. The ounce of sympathy within Bridget expanded as she remembered what it was like to watch Steve ditch her to hang out with another girl. Feeling angry for the poor girl, Bridget decided she was going to do more than just fix this girl's face.

"I can make it all go away, you know," Bridget told her. "Stick with me and I promise you'll never cry in a bathroom stall ever again."

The memory of it made Bridget smile. "At least you're grateful about it," she chuckled.

Tina smiled. "Not a day goes by where I don't silently thank you for it." She wiped the tears off Bridget's face. "Listen, I can make whatever these tears are for go away if you promise to come to my party tonight."

Bridget sighed. "You know what they'll do to you if they see me there, right?"

"They'll keep their mouths shut unless they want to be banned from future parties."

Before Bridget had the chance to answer, Steve came up to them.

"Is everything ok?" he asked. He saw Bridget's face and his expression softened. "Bridge, what happened?"

Tina interjected. "Hey Bridget, we should get going before anyone sees us." She turned to Steve. "We're gonna ditch class so we can get set up for the party tonight."

Bridget nodded her head and looked at Steve. "Yeah, I am so I'm gonna grab my stuff and I'll see you later."

As Bridget hurried back into the library to grab her things, she felt Steve follow her from behind.

"Are you sure you're ok?" he pressed, genuinely concerned.

Bridget swung her purse over her shoulder and smiled at him. "I'm fantastic. See you later."

She then rushed out of the library before Steve could say anymore. As she rejoined Tina back in the hallway, Tina linked her arm with Bridget's and said, "C'mon. Let's fix those tears and find you the best Halloween costume."

Just as they went to walk out the door, Bridget turned to face Tina. "I really appreciate this," she said, giving her friend a warm genuine smile.

Tina nodded. "If there's one thing I learned from you, it's that you never let yourself cry over any stupid boy. Instead, find a way to make them cry over you and with the right outfit, Steve Harrington will be the one who's crying."